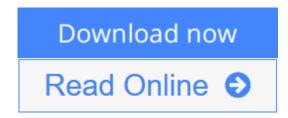


# **Pieces of Me**

By Amber Kizer



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When high school oddball and introvert Jessica Chai is killed in a car accident, her parents decide that Jessica would have wanted her organs donated to those who so desperately need these gifts of life. But Jessica is angry about dying and being dismembered. Taking the idea of cell memory to the next level, not only do the recipients get pieces of Jessica, but gets pieces of their memories and lives moving forward—she knows what they know and keeps tabs on their growth, recovery, and development. This begins her journey to learn her purpose as she begins to grasp that her ties to these teenagers goes beyond random weirdness. It's through their lives that Jessica learns about herself, as she watches the lives she literally touched continue to interlock.

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## **Editorial Review**

#### From School Library Journal

Gr 7 Up—When Jessica is declared brain dead after a car crash, her parents donate her organs, much to her lingering spirit's despair. Jessica observes the four teens who have benefitted from her organs: Samuel, who receives her kidneys; Vivian, her lungs and a heart; Leif, who receives tissue that will help his reconstructed joints; and Misty, her liver. The narration of her slow-motion crash, paramedics' attempts to revive her, and the confusion and chaos at the hospital when her parents learn of her fate is heartrending yet not overdramatic. The isolation, loneliness, and family stress faced by the chronically or critically ill characters is poignantly captured, as is the condescending attitude often shown toward them. Conflicts between the teens and their overbearing parents create sympathy for both sides. The survivors find solace in different ways: Samuel in computers, Vivian in art, and Misty in the public library. Although the emphasis does largely shift to the four beneficiaries, Jessica coming to terms with her death and the fate of her organs is an important aspect of the story. Facts about cystic fibrosis and post-transplant recovery are delivered conversationally without feeling tacked on. Although there are multiple protagonists with complex situations, each teen is fully developed as a character. An author's note explains deviations from the common post-transplant recovery time, and facts about organ donation. Brief information about cystic fibrosis, liver disease, and kidney disease is also included. Recommended for fans of medical dramas or Chris Lynch's Pieces (S. & S., 2013).—Jennifer Schultz, Fauquier County Public Library, Warrenton, VA

#### From **Booklist**

On one very bad day, cheerleaders engulf Jessica Chai in the school hallway and force her to cut her glistening blonde locks for their cancer charity competition. Her reward is a Halloween party invitation for that night that sets her mother on a mission to primp Jessica for optimal social belonging. Trying to find the party, Jessica has a fatal car accident, and the pieces of her become the guts of Kizer's organ-donation-centered tale. Gamer Samuel receives her kidneys, artist Vivian her lungs and heart, football star Leif receives tissue and bone, and library page Misty gets her liver. Jessica follows her donations within the recipients, wondering how much of her soul they received along with her cells. Chapters alternate with each recipient starring in his or her own recovery and life circumstances. Kizer crosses their paths while chronicling their serious health issues. Readers comfortable with spirited deceased protagonists will appreciate Jessica's support of her recipients' aspirations and impact on one another as they embrace her memory as a foundation for their interlaced futures. Grades 9-12. --Gail Bush

#### About the Author

AMBER KIZER fell in love with telling stories after one writing workshop; a million pages later, she still loves it.

### **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

### Matthew Waddell:

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#### **Melissa Wilcox:**

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